



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

INDIA

SUCCESS STORY

Increasing Access to Family Planning

Joint projects focuses on community-based counseling, distribution



Photo: Constella Futures

A community-based distribution worker provides family planning counselling to a local village woman in India, where USAID is collaborating with the government to provide high-quality family planning services.

“Now we can get condoms at our neighborhood paan shop at all times,” said Ramakant, a resident of Baraura, talking about the availability of contraceptives in non-traditional outlets such as paan shops, where locals come to chew betel leaves and areca nuts.

India's Uttar Pradesh state has 175 million inhabitants (a population larger than all but five countries in the world) and is the country's poorest state. Since 1992, Uttar Pradesh has been a focus state of a joint Indian Government-USAID project that provides high-quality reproductive health and family planning services in the state and other parts of India.

Thanks to the project, approximately one-third of married women used a modern family planning method in 2006, almost twice as many as in 1993. Moreover, the average family in Uttar Pradesh had more than five children in the early 1990s, while the average family there now has fewer than four. Innovations such as community-based distribution campaigns and social marketing efforts at the state and regional level led to an increase in availability of birth spacing methods. Community-based distributors have provided counseling, contraceptive supplies, and referrals to 1.6 million clients.

Shahjahan Begum is one of many community-based distributors who help village women in underserved areas understand the concept of pregnancy prevention and the use of specific contraceptive methods. She provides oral contraceptives and condoms to village women and refers them to government workers and facilities. She is the sole source of health information in her village, Amiya Kalan, in Sultanpur district. As one village woman explained, “Shahjahan Begum counsels us on different family planning methods, and we can buy condoms and oral contraceptive pills from her anytime.”

The project has trained Shahjahan and many other volunteers and health workers in family planning methods, and has also increased the number of social marketing outlets selling oral contraceptives and condoms (by 2006, 41 percent of rural villages had at least one outlet versus 19 percent of villages in 2000). It also engaged numerous non-governmental organizations as family planning partners, thus increasing the availability of services through the private sector.